



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

March 14, 2019

The Honorable Ellen Rosenblum  
Attorney General  
Oregon Department of Justice  
Justice Building  
1162 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Death of a baby in state regulated day care and potential cover-up

Madam Attorney General:

Journalists at The Oregonian have recently uncovered troubling facts surrounding the tragic death of a 9-month old boy in a state regulated day care and an apparent attempt by the executive branch to hide the death during a political campaign. See: Baby's death at Oregon day care kept quiet by state during heated governor's race, *The Oregonian* March 5, 2019.

As the article points out, federal regulations require disclosure of deaths at state-licensed day cares and previous practice in Oregon was to promptly report such tragedies. The journalists further uncovered that despite a public statement having been quickly drafted, the agency altered their rules on the first business day after the baby's death to keep the incident under wraps. All of this transpired during the height of a gubernatorial campaign in which the incumbent was already being criticized for previous day care tragedies.

At best this is gross negligence by a government agency tasked with protecting the children of our working parents. At worst this is a calculated effort by Governor Brown or her staff to sweep this child's death under the rug for political reasons. The public deserves to know which it is, and we cannot know without a thorough and independent investigation into this matter.

As such, the House Republican caucus formally asks that the Department of Justice investigate this death and the events subsequent to it. Questions to be addressed in such an investigation include but are not limited to:

- What did Governor Brown's staff tell her about this death and how the agency was going to handle it?

- Who authorized the agency to change their transparency rules the first business day after this child died to keep the information from becoming public?
- What did the Governor's spokesperson say to the agency staff the day after this child died when they talked on the phone?
- Who authorized the deal to prevent legal action against the day care owner in exchange for closing voluntarily?
- Why was the agency's public statement about the child's death shelved and who authorized that?
- In the 2017 death of Reno Roemer, police were in the middle of an ongoing investigation but that did not stop the state from disclosing his death. Why is this different and why is the Governor's Office blaming law enforcement for the hush up?
- Were parents of children at Little Big Blessings notified when the state cited Little Blessings for unsafe sleep practices in June 2018?

Oregon's working parents expect better from our government—especially with their most precious asset, their children. They expect and demand transparency, quality and safety in day care. Day care is an indispensable tool that working mothers rely on to keep their jobs and put food on the family table.

In order to restore credibility in our day care system and those charged with regulating it, I ask you to please direct your department to immediately conduct a thorough and independent investigation of this matter.

Sincerely,



Carl Wilson  
House Republican Leader  
District 3 Representative

cc: Aaron Knot, Esq.